

VA Stroke QUERI Circular, Volume 1, Issue 2

Featured Project.....

"Implementing Evidence in the Detection and Treatment of Post-stroke Depression"

In collaboration with a group of Stroke QUERI investigators, Linda Williams, MD, Stroke QUERI Clinical Coordinator, is in the planning stages for a new project that will focus on enhancing the implementation of the existing primary care depression performance measure to improve the screening, diagnosis, and appropriate treatment of PSD.

First, Investigators will identify how clinicians are detecting and treating post-stroke depression.

Second, they will look at how many veterans with stroke are diagnosed and treated for depression within the first 12 months after stroke.

Third, they will identify what types of clinicians are most likely to be in a position to screen post-stroke patients for depression.

The Stroke QUERI will use these findings

to implement programs for depression treatment to improve the screening, diagnosis, and appropriate treatment of post-stroke depression.

On the horizon.....



Because there is no evidence that PSD is significantly different than depression in patients with other chronic medical conditions, our objective is to work with other QUERI centers and investigators to adapt and implement quality depression care strategies in veteran stroke survivors.

Addition to the Implementation Research Coordinating Team.....

Similar to the structure of the Ischemic Heart Disease QUERI Implementation team, a Master's Level researcher, Ms. Laurie Plue, MA, will collaborate with the Stroke Implementation Research Coordinator, Teresa Damush, PhD, to assist with the focused effort towards Implementation Research. Ms. Plue holds a Master's Degree in Applied Social Psychology and is collaborating as a Clinical Research Coordinator with Dr. Linda Williams on a NIH funded, Post Stroke Depression Intervention Randomized Controlled Trial. She has collaborated on research projects at the Rich-

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Upcoming Conferences

October 7-10, 2004, **American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (AAPM&R) 65th Annual Assembly**, Phoenix, Arizona
<http://www.aapmr.org/assembly/general.htm>

October 29-31, 2004, **11th Annual Stroke Belt Consortium Meeting**, Orlando, FL
<http://www.strokebelt.org/index.html>

December 1-3, 2004, **Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) National Meeting**, location TBA
<http://www.hsrdr.research.va.gov/queri/>

February 2-4, 2005 **American Stroke Association, International Stroke Conference**, New Orleans, LA
<http://strokeconference.americanheart.org/portal/strokeconference/sc>

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New Collaborations.....

Maude Rittman, PhD

Dr. Rittman is enthusiastically bringing her expertise in the area of caregiving to the Stroke QUERI portfolio of research objectives. Her research interests include Stroke recovery, ethnicity, care-givers, and families. Dr. Rittman is a qualitative researcher specializing in understanding the everyday lives of persons with stroke, their caregivers, and the experience of living with a chronic illness.

She is a Research Health Scientist with the HSR&D/RR&D Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center of Excellence (RORC) at the Malcom Randall VAMC. Dr. Rittman is currently the Coordinator of Research Focus 3 and the Assistant Director of Career Development at the RORC. She also serves in the



Maude Rittman, PhD

capacity of Associate Chief of Nursing Service for Research at the VA and Assistant Professor at the University of Florida, College of Health Professions.

Dr. Rittman is currently the principal investigator of a longitudinal multi-site research project titled "Culturally Sensitive Models of Stroke Recovery and Caregiving after Discharge Home." The primary purpose of this study is to define and describe recovery trajectory models and what influences these trajectories for Puerto Rican Hispanic, African-American and non-Hispanic white veterans during the first two years after

discharge home following acute stroke.

Research Findings will assist program planners and clinicians to develop culturally sensitive care delivery programs. Information will help target interventions at specific times to improve effectiveness. Culturally appropriate educational materials can be developed to help patients and families understand where they are in the recovery process.

"One of my many goals is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life for veterans and implement evidence based practice to reduce caregiver burden."

Featured Investigator.....

Huanguang "Charlie" Jia, PhD

Dr. Jia is a research health scientist at the Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center (RORC) at the North Florida/South Georgia VA Medical Center, and a Courtesy Professor with the University of Florida.

He currently serves on the Stroke QUERI Operations Committee, Methodology Core, Dissemination Core, Administrative Core and Goals 1, 2, & 4. Dr. Jia's research interests include: Chronic Diseases; Health Services and Systems; Special (Underserved, High Risk) Populations, Epidemiology; Quality of Care; Resource Use and



Charlie Jia, PhD

Cost, Quality of Life; Utilization and Cost of Health Care. He currently has a newly VA HSR&D funded project titled "VA and Non-VA Rehabilitation Utilization by Veterans with Acute Stroke".

The purpose of this study is to understand the utilization and outcomes of stroke rehabilitation services by veterans residing in the state of Florida who use single source of care (VA only) versus those patients who received care

from multiple sources (VA & Medicare, VA & Medicaid, and VA, Medicare & Medicaid in calendar years 2000 & 2001. Dr. Jia's study will be utilized to meet the objective of linking VA, Medicare, and Medicaid data to evaluate differences between veterans with and without VA follow-up post stroke.

"One of the aims in my current research is to assess whether variation in utilization patterns affect patient outcomes."

Stroke QUERI Progress.....

Following the adoption of the VA/DoD stroke guideline by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA)

National Clinical Practices Guidelines Council, the VA Em-

ployee Education System (EES), in collaboration with the Office of Quality Performance (OQP), and Patient Care Services, has developed a continuing education module for VHA Patient Care Services.

The module is designed as an independent, web-based program of study with two goals:



- 1) to provide the learner with knowledge of the VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline (CPG) for the Management of Stroke; and
- 2) to use case vignettes to provide opportunities for learners to apply the guideline to emphasize how best to use evidence to provide care for the patient who needs stroke rehabilitation.

This model was distributed to clinicians by the VA Employee Education System in September through investigators affiliated with the Stroke QUERI: Clifford Marshall, BS, with Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Rita Kobb, ARNP, with Community Care Coordination Ser-

vice, and John Booss, MD, VA National Director of Neurology.

To view a full description of program, please go to http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu_detail.asp?id=18802

A Letter of Intent (LOI) has been submitted for a project to be led by Stroke QUERI investigator Dean Reker, PhD, that will focus on the evaluation of this education intervention through the examination of institutional-level compliance. Upon LOI approval the proposal for funding for this project will be submitted in December, 2004.

Executive Committee.....

The initial Executive Committee meeting will be held in conjunction with the National QUERI Meeting scheduled for December 1-3, 2004.

The structure of this meeting will begin with brainstorming sessions to create summaries of existing evidence based practice in alignment with our strategic plan that could be moved forward into translation and implementation. Workgroups will be formed based on the members specific field of expertise. The focus of this meeting is to create long range collaborations with the intention of adding QUERI agendas to existing projects. We are looking forward to a mutually beneficial working relationship with the Executive Committee.

We are pleased to announce the enhancement of our executive committee with the addition of three new members:

David T. Lowenthal, MD

Dr. Lowenthal is a veteran, a stroke survivor, and currently holds the following professional positions: Clinic Director, Hypertension Center, University of Florida/VA Medical Center; Director, Geriatric Fellowship, University of Florida/VA Medical Center; Director, Hypertension Clinic, University of Florida. He is currently a member of the VA Faculty Leaders Project for Improved Care at the End of Life. Dr. Lowenthal will provide his expertise from the VA consumer perspective in order to advise us on the implementation and monitoring of programs within the VA.

Thomas M. McNish, MD, MPH

Dr. McNish is a P.O.W. of the Vietnam War (1966-1973). Dr. McNish, in addition to his personal experience, serves on P.O.W. boards and is actively involved in P.O.W. health issues. Data from the VA-National Academy of Sciences

P.O.W. suggests that this group of veterans may be especially high risk for stroke decades after repatriation. As the Stroke QUERI looks to fill gaps in the stroke care for veterans, former P.O.W.'s, we want to specifically address the needs of this group of veterans. Dr. McNish will provide his expertise in this area.

Jean R. Slutsky, PA, MSPH

Ms. Slutsky is the Acting Director, Center for Outcomes and Evidence, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). The Center is responsible for the Evidence Based Practice Center program, the National Guideline Clearinghouse™ project, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, the Technology Assessment Program, and an intramural and extramural research portfolio on translating research into practice, outcomes and effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness

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Stroke QUERI Mission Statement

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"Implementation of Research into Clinical Practice"



The mission of the Stroke QUERI is to reduce stroke risk and maximize the functional status and quality of life of veterans with stroke by systematically implementing clinical research findings and evidence-based guidelines into routine clinical practice.

The Stroke QUERI has assembled an excellent team of national leaders and research investigators with the intention of continually developing collaborations with other institutions and investigators centered on the VA stroke population to further expand implementation efforts.

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analyses. The experience and skill of Ms. Slutsky will help strengthen the ability of the Stroke QUERI to evaluate existing evidence-based practices for implementation in the VA.

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and L. Roudebush VAMC HSRD, The Regenstrief Institute, Inc., and Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis during the past ten years. As part of her duties, Ms. Plue has been responsible for the daily management, progression, and protocol of a multi-site study performed in outpatient clinical practices for stroke patients. Ms. Plue has experience with designing paper and computerized research questionnaires, conducting interviews, and with data management.

In addition, Ms. Plue is a certified, disease self-management instructor with the Arthritis Foundation enabling her to provide insight into our patient centered interventions promoting self-management.

Research Coordinator

Pamela W. Duncan, PhD

Clinical Coordinator

Linda Williams, MD

Translation Implementation Coordinator

Teresa Damush, PhD

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